

Message Text

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CONFIDENTIAL QUITO 5703

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, EC, ENRG

SUBJECT: VICE-ADMIRAL POVEDA'S SPEECH AT AUGUST 10 NATIONAL DAY
CEREMONIES

1. PRESIDENT OF THE SUPREME COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENT, VICE-ADMIRAL ALFREDO POVEDA, TOOK ADVANTAGE OF ECUADOR'S AUGUST 10 NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATIONS TO DELIVER A STRONG POLICY STATEMENT REAFFIRMING THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT'S PETROLEUM AND POLITICAL POLICIES. HE OUTLINED THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS FACING ECUADOR AND REITERATED THE GOE'S INTENTION TO COMBAT THOSE PROBLEMS.

2. POVEDA TOOK A RELATIVELY FIRM STAND AGAINST THOSE WHO USE ULTRA-NATIONALIST ARGUMENTS TO ATTACK THE GOE'S PETROLEUM POLICY. HE STRESSED THAT THE GOE WILL REQUIRE MAXIMIZATION OF PETROLEUM PRODUCTION AND EXPORTS IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE LAW IN SPITE OF PRESSURES BROUGHT TO THWART THAT POLICY, "ESPECIALLY THOSE FOLLOWING FOREIGN GUIDELINES OR ORIENTATION AND WHICH ARE CONTRARY TO THE INTERESTS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE ECUADOREAN WAY OF DOING THINGS." WHILE EMPHASIZING THAT THE GOE WILL TAKE ALL STEPS NECESSARY TO PROTECT ECUADOR'S NATURAL RESOURCES, HE ADDED THAT THE GOE "WILL NOT PERMIT ELEMENTS CALLING THEMSELVES PATRIOTS TO TAKE POSITIONS OR ACTIONS WHICH ONLY SERVE TO PRODUCE POLITICAL ANARCHY AND ECONOMIC CHAOS."

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3. POVEDA'S DISCUSSION OF THE PLAN TO TURN THE GOVERNMENT

OVER TO CIVILIANS WAS MARKED BY STRONG CONDEMNATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES AND OPPOSITION GROUPS. DEFENDING THE GOE'S POSITION AS BEING IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST AND WITHOUT ULTERIOR MOTIVES, HE LASHED OUT AT CRITICS OF THAT POLICY WHO "HAVE DEDICATED ALL OF THEIR EFFORTS TO CRITICISM AND REFUSAL TO COOPERATE" INSTEAD OF PROPOSING PROGRAMS AND ACTIONS MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE COUNTRY. GOING FURTHER, POVEDA ALLUDED TO "A SERIES OF PRESSURES AND MOVEMENTS, OF IMPUTATIONS AND ACCUSATIONS INTENDED TO DENIGRATE THE GOE," SAID THE CAMPAIGN WAS DIRECTED BY "AGENTS WITH FOREIGN ORIENTATION" WHO ARE ATTEMPTING TO TAKE POWER BY ANY MEANS POSSIBLE. NONETHELESS, POVEDA DECLARED IN FIRM LANGUAGE THE GOE'S INTENTION TO TRANSFER POWER WITHIN THE PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED TIMEFRAME, I.E., BY THE END OF 1977. HE ALSO REAFFIRMED THE GOE'S INTENTION TO PERMIT THE PROCESS TO CONTINUE WITH A MAXIMUM OF FREEDOM, WARNING AT THE SAME TIME THAT FREEDOM COULD NOT BE CARRIED TO EXCESS OR TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF "TO INCREASE ATTACKS AGAINST THE ARMED FORCES OR ITS GOVERNMENT."

4. COMMENT: POVEDA'S SPEECH WAS NOTABLE FOR SEVERAL REASONS. FIRST, BY TAKING A FIRM LINE ON CRITICAL ISSUES, HE PROBABLY SUCCEEDED IN BOLSTERING HIS AND THE SUPREME COUNCIL'S STOCK IN THE WAKE OF WIDESPREAD RUMORS OF A CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT. SECOND, THE SPEECH DEMONSTRATED THAT POVEDA BELIEVES THE GREATEST THREAT TO THE GOE AND ITS PLANS FOR RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT IS FROM THE LEFT. REFERENCES TO AGENTS WITH FOREIGN IDEOLOGY REFLECT THAT CONCERN, AND MENTION OF PRESSURES OBEDIENT TO FOREIGN ORIENTATION IN THE CONTEXT OF OIL POLICY THUS APPEARS TO BE A WARNING TO THE LEFT RATHER THAN TO TEXACO-GULF. THIRD, THE STATEMENT THAT THE GOE WILL NOT PERMIT ABUSE OF THE ATMOSPHERE OF FREEDOM IS A WARNING TO POLITICAL GROUPS THAT THE GOE WILL NOT TOLERATE INDEFINITELY DESTRUCTIVE OPPOSITION TO THE PLAN TO RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT.

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